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UA68/6/2 Voices, Vol. V, No. 2

Western Writers

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WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
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Winter 1960

Voices



Voices

Vol. V, No. 2

Winter, 1960

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SO SINGING WING THE DOVES

So singing wing the doves and down,

In spirals swinging, wing they on.

In cloud-strewn sky, go blazing by,

Now pine of white, reflecting light

Til doves and sun are down.

Horizon-bound, the doves are springing,

Winging two by two to sea

So singing wing the doves and down

And two by two to lea.

Susan Taylor Grafton

DIVESTITURE WITH OVERTURES

In the far-off land
A White-cloaked magician arched
Stark, pale-blue hands in sacrifice
To black-darkened sky, and cast piercing glance
Into unfathomable space
with naught short of Ptolemaic ego,
screaming that the dust had grown old.

Icy snowflakes fell in orderly symmetries
Around his frozen form,
Telling the ground to grow cold and
Freeze.

And Earth's surface formed
One solid crystalline cube,
Culminating in his prostrate upright figure,
With hands outstretched to the stars,
Which were deceptively clever
In being only post-ionospheric.

And then, with a blink and a twinkle, his
Form chinked into multi-shiny, many-glimmering
Particles,

And
In the distant pink land
 white bunny peeked from burrow of bramble
And smiled.
No More from hat would
He.

For the druid was dead,
lying in fragmentation (many hard,
 wet little ices which would never re-fuse) . . .

Francis L. Daugherty

VILLANELLE: AMERICA, THE CRY

Surely, mine is a special case,
 I've ranted centuries for thee,
Let me go not with the commonplace.

I've turned every way this lonely face
 And given not to mad hypocrisy;
Surely mine is a special case.

Have I not eager been to ever grace
 This dried up womb with liberty?
Let me go not with the commonplace.

Am I the Pharisee whose words do trace
 The fall of empire's blasphemy?
Surely mine is a special case.

Have I not been tender, brother, Christ to brave
 This side of darkness, death and misery?
Let me go not with the commonplace.

Oh! Were it so that at that gate
I might spell out with truths my plan;
Surely mine is a special case,
Let me go not with the commonplace.

Gerry Konsler

I SWIFTLY TWIST THE KEYS

I swiftly twist the keys which loose the door,
And silently I stand inside the room.
The shadows there are gray, the curtains drawn,
And on the floor are strewn about the toys
With which I played, when sitting all alone.
From all proportions, now this life has grown
And no more will I see the ragged boys,
Who, like myself, comprised a city's spawn.
The old house now must fall, so in my room,
I'll set afire the curtains—such a bore.

Francis L. Daughtery

FROM NEVER-NEVER LAND TO NEVER, NEVER MORE

Why can't I linger here awhile
As Peter does and Tinker-bell
And all the gang?

It's pleasant here and gay and warm—
Eternal spring and youth abide,
And so would I.

The mermaids' songs entice me
To stay and play, perhaps forever.
Adulthood is so dull, I hear.

I'm not afraid of Captain Hook
Or pirates brave, but like the crocodile
I fear I've swallowed that darn clock,

And it ticks and tocks so quick and fast
That soon 't will be too late
For sprinkling pixie dust.

And yet, in spite of longings to remain,
I go and leave behind all childhood fantasy;
Back to Nana and reality.

Linda Tufts

SILENT AGE

Silent age that sleeps on golden dawn
and wakes not from his bed to live,
but dreams with gentle nods of nymphs who frown
on lives like his. To men no pity gives
this silent solemn sleeper. Chase he in dreams
the dark-haired maids who laugh and play and stay
so long when he is near, but fear the gleam-
ing eyes of death that's his. In waking clay
he met again to take what was his own.
And when the light of life does die and hell's
own light does shine so bright, then death is shown
to wake at last, and walk sad-soul'd to hell.

Sondra McDaniel

ON EVOLUTION: MY TOWER SHALL REMAIN

Erected by me of my father's battles
Fought and friended since the time my animal
Knew not of me and warriors though they
Screamed.

Proud beast, his tears in dumbness kiss
My feet though by his gift I'm the rose
Set upon his brow.

My fancy eyes know the blinding darkness
When they bend to praise his fight though
Centuries have ended my vestige in their
Struggle.

He faced with hidden sight his enemies and
Offered not his back and yet I shun the
Product of my shrewd discovery and wince
That I toy with tools which conquered night
For me.

More than mere reminder do I thank him,
He braves me in my ignorance. Rest deep
Noble ancestor, I shall gentle the earth.
My tower shall remain.

Gerry Konsler

LONELINESS

Loneliness, you whom I fear most,
You laugh at me from an empty mailbox,
You steal upon me in a crowded room,
You speak to my heart in the midst of a gay time,
I hear you in the whistle of a train
In soft night sounds,
In the smell of spring,
In remembering
You are a void, an emptiness that needs filling.
Ah, loneliness, leave me, and love,
Come take thy place.

Pat Patterson

DEATH OF A NUN

Silently they thread their way
Through the mists
Bearing their grief
On their shoulders

To place it
In the ground
Out of sight
Away from the cares
And burdens
Of this hallowed life

They chant a low
Harmonious dirge
A requiem
Antiphonal
Sadness

Jerry O. Dalton

IDOL

Still rests the soul of immortality

Undisturbed

By the bleating
and the slaughter
of the lambs
in His fold;

Unmoved

As mere mortal
links of brass
Weave a tale
of frozen chain;

Unconcerned

Though with reaching,
searching steps
His charge lies,
his soul entombed;

Unmoved

By the hopeless,
constant echoes
Of his caller's
vain, lost clamor;

Uninterrupted

On his time—
erected spire
High above man's fervent,
labored supplication;

Unchallenged

For who would
dare; would you
Defy him who must
never be defied?

Quiet and still rests his soul, for he is immortal.

James Skaggs

TO A GENTLE MAN

You who are most gentle
Of all men smile and wink
And softness blends with light.
Sit here upon this pedestal
Reserved for you.

My other gods are banished, fled;
Apollo, Zeus, the great god Thor,
But they were not so finely made
As you, so stay awhile.
No incense burns

But in your eyes; the god of hate
Is sacrificed in your humility and love,
And wisdom whispers in your words,
Here at your feet I kneel;
I genuflect to gentleness,
And seek your soul.

Linda Tufts

DILEMMA

Demons and goblins, ghouls and druids,
Sweet werewolves of the mind, where are you?
In your mouldy caverns, incense of hemlock
And civet perfume the banal autumn air,
While here my frantic nostrils smell only soap.

Black and beloved lovelinesses,
Come back! Surround me again with the
Sussurus of your flapping leathery wings,
The yellow sulphur odor of your chortling,
I am lonely without the redness of your slitted eyes,

Somewhere, a crone crouches over her cauldron,
Making evil from toads' hearts;
Somewhere, a slaving spider gloats in his web,
Foretasting a fly's succulence.
And I cannot find them in this sterile room!

I am hungry for the insidious hiss
Of flames in your fetid whispering,
But I cannot draw a pentagram
Of bats' blood and black tallow
To come to you.

Come back, little fanged imaginings!
I'm only a day from deadline,
And no story.

Kathleen Adkins

THE ACTRESS

Bring up four on me, for four is a bright light,
And give me a lavender foot,
for lavender is a haunting color,
Close on three before fade-out,
for I am still young,
and the creaminess of my flesh is carnal.

And (John) when I kiss you in No. 3
Remember that kiss,
for that is what it is really like, John . . .
But (Helen) when you slap me in No. 2
Slap me with a handful of small stones,
For they are the hardest stones
And I want a blazing bruise . . .

Downy flakes of a spot beam break over me,
And in each of your rays may I see the face
of a reflected, cheering audience of shining souls.

And always remember this:
That creation is a subjective thing;
That every artist is an Aquinal creator;
And that our divinity surpasses that
of Christ (Remember that, Trouper . . .

Trouper, when I die (in about fifty years . . .
They shall not say, "She was whiter than
Driven snow" . . .
They shall not say that I had artistic integrity . . .
They'll read my name in an encyclopedia and say,
"Daddy said the goddam girl could act!"
And now that this soliloquy has given itself my voice . . .
Pull the cord and kill the lights.

Francis L. Daugherty

TO P. R. G.

Let not gold to gray become,
Nor misty dawn to apprehensive dusk,
With old and empty treasure chest,
Cached with memories black and barren,

And listen,
For the clamor, the glisten, the clatter of youth
Need not be retrospect's cruel reality,
But should perhaps retain the clover chains,
The sparkle in a for-sure friendly eye,
And listen.

Pink of morning,
Heated earth of afternoon,
Hush of evening,
Hold in warm reverence
With crooked smile and twinkle and
Reminisce,

For
Days once gone will come again,
But days alone will be alike,
And the human thing is a moth in flux,
The fragile days, as china teacups
Chip, fade and are viewed with quickening
Eyes.

The frost, the tinkling droplets and cleanness of rain
Bring warmth and a hazy gaze to age,
And time goes backward to a streetlamp in the snow,
To love's first innocent kiss.

Francis L. Daugherty

FOUR O'CLOCK CONFESSION

I am my own saint

the me of me

And I reject the Jude

the Christopher

I reject Omnipotent Mary Ignatius and Saint Anne

And Timothy and all the other plaster gods who stand miraculously mute

I am my own medal

and my own penny candle

I am my own prayer card

the holy water

and the wine

And I reject barbaric chants

The pagan ritual of mass

the robed and radiant priests

Who mutter in some secret communion with the almighty altar

I reject the cherub boys flailing incense

I shall not cross myself nor genuflect

To any but the God within me

And I shall not be damned for it

Nor spend eternity in the cold-water flat of purgatory

My God and I walk hand in hand to death

Laughing all the while

I am my own saint

the me of me

To Hell with all the rest

Susan Taylor Grafton

DOUBT

The connotations of love and grief
So often attached to the human heart,
Are chipped, as on marble, in bas-relief,
But love, grief, and marble are quick to depart.

That love and grief must be reduced,
In stature, to particulars,
Synonymized with an organ of man
And focussed upon as troubadours,
Makes real the fear I cannot say,
That man knows grief in terms of a day;
Makes now the doubt I fear to speak,
That man knows love in terms of a week.

For can man feel love for the trees in the park?
Or can he say only, to a woman in the dark,
"I love you."

And can man feel grief for the hungry, the tired?
Or can he say only, in words uninspired,
"I'm sorry."

All men can see much and understand more,
But few see the doorknob that opens the door.

Francis L. Daugherty

SONNET III

How strange to think that but for time and place
We might have loved, or shared celestial fire.
How strange to see the stars we cannot trace
And stranger still the night of lost desire.
And haunting is the moon in such a sky
And clouds that whisper peace to such a night,
And all that is forbidden . . . you and I . . .
That we must wander on without their light.
How strange that love is but a crippled bird
That shall not live beyond another spring
And we shall watch it pass without a word
Or hands in hope to mend a broken wing.

This solace, then, I offer you, my friend . . .
That things without beginning have no end.

Susan Taylor Grafton

SELINA HARDING

Selina Harding, a once-piquant bride,
Watched her husband-lover ride
Into battle, courteously,
And thought of eighteen forty-three.
"Forty-three was my wedding-summer,
But this year's rose is the martial-drummer's."

Dim days followed, without number,
Selina's nights of uneasy slumber.
With velvet briskness, gallantly,
She managed Harding's property.
She prayed each night for his return
And gave her child a verse to learn.

Tedious days, and unremembered,
"Till that bitterest of Decembers
When that shrieking fiend called War
Came with the skirmish of sixty-four
And made his camp in her tulip-bed,
Leaving a wake of ragged dead.

Did Selina weep, I wonder,
As the cannon's quaking thunder
Carved their gasping history
On her brain, indelibly?
"Forty-three was my wedding-summer,
But this year's rose is the martial-drummer's."

Richard Oakley

THE INTELLECTS HAVE MET

The intellects have met in suspended session,
And talked youth's heart to point of satisfaction,
And pooled the resources of the greatest neophyte minds,
And conclusions have been in profusion.

When first we sat in apprehensive assembly,
Camelot's tables of fabled dimensions held no light,
And the coffee houses of Pope's Brittanic isle,
Could offer no favorable comparison.

For we had youth's liberal heart,
And youth's liberal speech,
And no sagacic withholdings on the part
Of any tight-lipped mystic.

We talked of God (did He of us?),
And the idiots in control, and hell;
Communism is perfect in theory, and
Those in control should be behind a plow,
Somewhere in the deepest Bahamic shrub.

We talked of our naive, power-mad, and worthless enemies,
And of teaching's boredom and of sex and sin,
And coffee flowed and hasty bites were taken
In fear of missing one earth-shaking word,

(Do you think?)

When we have achieved age and complacency,
Regret and amusement will be ours for these hours,
Or will we, rather, look back in regret
That we did not pick up and change this blessed globe?

Francis L. Daugherty

LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES BELOW E. E. CUMMINGS

Huh;?
 (e.
 ;
 e).
 Cu/;mmi:
 ngs)
 not that i dont understand
 or anything like that maybe,
 e.e., but by golly i just perhaps
 sometimes dont compre;hend exactly
 what
 you
 do
 with
 words
 atall;

 HONEST.....(
 i'm just as always
 inteLLECTual as any;one.
 BUt i'm so ignorstupile
 when it comes tO
 commasbracketsemicolonscapitalsanalll
 ;so

 i read your little
 ÷poems÷onetwo threefour five
 just like that.
 and feel so in;ade;quate(un)
 e.
 :)

Francis L. Daugherty

MOUNTAIN SNOW

The brooding giants calm the air
 And wait, in silence, the laces to catch
 With twigged hair, as they patch
 And smooth the autumn gauntness
 Of their lair.

Kathleen Adkins

BRISE MARINE

La chair est triste, hélas! et j'ai lu tous les livres.
Fuir! la-bas fuir! Je sens que les oiseaux sont ivres
D'être parmi l'écume inconnue et les cieux!
Rien, ni les vieux jardins reflétés par les yeux
Ne retiendra ce cœur qui dans la mer se trempe,
O nuits! ni la clarte deserte de ma lampe
Sur le vide papier que la blancheur défend
Et ni la jeune femme allaitant son enfant.
Je partirai! Steamer balancant ta mature,
Leve l'ancre pour une exotique nature!
Un Ennui, desole par les cruels espoirs,
Croît encore à l'adieu suprême des mouchoirs!
Et, peut-être les mats, invitant les orages
Sont-ils de ceux qu'un vent penche sur les naufrages,
Perdus, sans mats, ni fertiles îlots . . .
Mais, ô mon cœur, entends le chant des matelots!

Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898)

SEASCAPE

The flesh is sad, alas! and I have read all books.
To flee! To fly away! I feel that birds are intoxicated
Amid unknown foam and skies!
Neither old gardens mirrored in the eyes,
Nor the brightness of my lamp,
O nights! on the empty paper defended by whiteness,
Nor the young woman nursing her son,
Nothing will retain this heart which drenches itself in the sea.
I shall leave! Vessel balancing your masts,
Weigh anchor for exotic nature!
A weariness, grieved by cruel hopes
Believes yet in the supreme farewell!
And perhaps the masts, inviting the storms
Are those bent by a wind on shipwrecks,
Lost, without masts, or fertile isles . . .
But, O my soul, hear the song of the seaman.

Translation by Nancy Baugh

MILLONARIOS

Tomame de las mano. Vamonos a la lluvia,
descalzos y ligeros de ropa, sin paraguas,
con el cabello al viento y el cuerpo a la caricia
oblicua, refrescante y menuda del agua.

Que rian los vecinos! Puesto que somos jovenes
y los dos nos amamos y nos gusta la lluvia,
vamos a ser felices co el gozo sencillo
de un casal de gorriones que en la via se arrulla

Mas alla estan los campos y el camino de acacias
y la quinta suntuosa de aquel pobre senor
millonario y obeso que con todos sus soros,

No podria comprarnos ni un gramo del tesoro
inefable and supreme que nos has dado Dios:
ser flexibles, ser jovenes, estar llenos de amor.

Juana de Ibarbourou, Uruguay, 1895

MILLIONAIRES

Take my hand. We shall go out in the rain,
barefoot and gay, without umbrellas,
with the wind in our hair and our bodies in its curved caress,
refreshed and soothed in the water.

Let the neighbors laugh! Since we are young
and in love with each other and we love the rain,
we will be happy with the simple joy
of a nest of sparrows that bill and coo on the by-way.

But there are the fields and the road of weeping willows
and the luxurious country home of that poor
Mr. Millionaire, grown fat with all his gold.

He could not buy from us one gram of the treasure,
ineffable and supreme, that God has given us:
to be flexible, to be young, to be replete with love.

Translation by Linda Tufts

IN DER FREMDE

Grün war die Weide,
Der Himmel blau,
War sassen beide
Auf glänzender Au.

Sind's Nachtigallen
Wieder, was ruft,
Lerchen, die schallen
Aus warmer Luft?

Ich hordie Lieder,
Fern, ohne dich,
Lenz ist's wohl wieder,
doch nicht für mich.

Joseph V. Eichendorff (1788-1857)

FAR FROM HOME

Green were the meadows,
Blue was the heaven,
As we sat together
By the shimmering waters.

Are there nightingales
Again calling;
Larks, whose songs resound
From the warm air?

I hear the songs
from afar, without you;
Indeed, it's spring again,
But not for me.

Translation by Kathleen Adkins

A Short Story by Richard Oakley

Mrs. Gordon stepped from the suburban beauty parlor and patted the halo of curls closer to her head. She was almost happy. The sun made a mirror of the Fashion Shoppe window and she peered at the reflection she found there. Gilda really did a superlative job this time, she thought: rich, deep chestnut with just a hint of pewter glinting here and there. She was terribly grateful to modern science for helping her avoid that drab, salt-and-pepper hue one so often saw on women her age.

She continued up the walk which bordered the ell of the shopping center, glancing absently into shop windows as she walked and thinking dismally of her age. She had an hour to kill before her bridge game and she had hoped to spend it without the intrusion of any unpleasant thoughts, but she had been unable, all morning, to shake the feeling that she had lost ten years somewhere. Forty-eight this October and only yesterday she had been thirty and young. Where had the years gone? Were they simply a dreary, relentless procession of days like this one: rising at ten, lunch and shopping until mid-afternoon, then calling on equally bored friends? She had an uneasy feeling that if she died this week it would matter very little to anyone—least of all to herself. She doubted if anyone would notice her absence for several days—the children were grown and away from home; Horace spent as few waking hours as possible in their house. When he was not seeing his patients, he contrived to be busy at the hospital, so it was not unusual for her to take both lunch and dinner alone.

She sometimes wondered why she bothered to go home at all. Harriet managed the kitchen much better than she ever could and the cleaning woman freed her from the onerous chore of keeping house. It seemed that others had insinuated themselves into the position of controlling what should, by rights, be her domain. Was there a conspiracy afoot against women like her, a conspiracy which rendered them so useless that they would eventually wither in a hell of inactivity?

She brushed these thoughts away resolutely, knowing that in this direction lay, if not madness, at least neurosis. She had read enough magazine articles to recognize the signs. It wasn't that she found her life distasteful; it was just that she had nothing to do, no purpose, no—What was that silly word she heard some teen-agers using?—"kicks," that was it. Ellen, she told herself firmly, what you need is a "kick."

But what should it be? There was a problem. An affair? Too messy, too difficult to handle. Alcohol? She swiftly turned over in her mind the middle-

aged drunks she had seen cavorting about the country club and dismissed this idea immediately. She didn't need money, so that eliminated stealing.

She paused beneath a quaint, cleverly aged wooden shield which swayed in the breeze as it bore its discreet legend: "Colony House—Fine Food." She marched inside and quickly found a half-concealed corner table. Ordinarily, she gave little notice to the decor of the Colony House, but today she glanced with a faint displeasure. Everything in the room was so appallingly quaint. The place fairly writhed with ill-matched natural woods, and prim little Hitchcock chairs thrust themselves up from the floor every few feet, uncompromisingly, like starched black snakes. I don't believe, she decided abruptly, that I'll patronize the Colony House any more.

In her perusal she noticed idly that each table was equipped with a genuine pine salt cellar and pepper mill. These would match nicely with my curtains, she thought. I must remember to pick up a pair before . . . Her thoughts trailed off, tripped over a word, and then took up an entirely different thread. How strange, she thought slowly, that I should use a word almost daily without once noticing that it has more than one meaning. "Pick up," for example, doesn't always mean "purchase." She smiled gleefully. Why not literally "pick up" a pair of table ornaments—this pair? It might be fun to steal some worthless trinket; it's something I've certainly never done before. She glanced around casually and saw that there were only three customers in the room; matrons like herself, each concentrating intently on one of the many low-calorie specials benevolently offered by the Colony House. Two waitresses were taking advantage of the hostess' absence by sneaking gulps of stolen tea in one corner. After making quite sure that no one was watching, Mrs. Gordon quietly opened her purse, slid the wooden articles off the table into it and surreptitiously drew out a handkerchief. Her head bowed, she coughed delicately several times and looked up nervously. Slowly, slowly, her eyes swept the room. No one had seen her. That's one advantage of being such an anonymous person, she thought grimly; they wouldn't notice me if I had an epileptic fit right here. Completely relieved, she lingered over her coffee fifteen minutes and left, smiling pleasantly at the hostess as she walked out.

Mrs. Gordon hummed merrily to herself as she opened her front door that evening and placed her bundles on the hall table. Today had been exhilarating, more fun than she had had in years. It had taken all her self-control to keep from telling the girls at the bridge game about her new-found amusement. Tomorrow, she would try her hand at lifting from the other stores in the shopping center. Ah, tomorrow! She could hardly wait.

The next day, Mrs. Gordon went to the drugstore, bought three magazines and a jar of cold cream and made off successfully with a pair of ear-

rings. Tawdry baubles that they were, at the moment she prized them more than her engagement ring. She then went to the hardware store, where she bought a set of aluminum pans and managed to snatch, again successfully, a chisel and a screwdriver.

Throughout the remainder of the week, Mrs. Gordon found it necessary to make six trips to various shopping centers on the west side of town. Practice makes perfect, she thought frivolously, and by Saturday she felt she had acquired enough skill to tackle the downtown area.

Harmon-Mitchell was the largest, oldest and finest department store in the state. Mrs. Gordon had patronized it often in the past; it was the only place within a radius of two hundred miles where you could get really stylish models of Dr. Funk's orthopedic shoes. She tried on a pair and was trying to decide how to go about stealing the shoe-horn when something caught her eye. At the counter to her left was an attractive display of pens and pencils. Occupying the most prominent position were two elegant ladies' pens. Each was made of gold; each had a small diamond set into the clip-holder. One had a minute string of emeralds around the cap; the other had a similar setting of rubies. The price of each was clearly marked: sixty-five dollars. Here, she thought, is the acid test. If I can walk out of the store with one of those pens . . . It was delightful even to savor an anticipated victory; she could vividly imagine her triumph after so successful a **coup**.

After thanking the shoe-clerk, she gathered up her purse and her packages and wandered slowly to the stationery counter. She fingered several articles and slowly made her way along the counter until the pens were a few inches from her hands. She looked around carefully. The nearest clerk was several yards away with her back to Mrs. Gordon. There were a few men and women hurrying by with tense expressions on their faces. She watched for several minutes and saw that no one had looked her way for a long time.

She put her purse on the counter, drew a slip of paper from it and scribbled something on it with one of the cheap pens from the rack. As she replaced the cheap pen, she let her hand brush across the case which held the gold pens. The one set with emeralds slipped out of its display box quite easily; she dropped it in her purse alongside the scrap of paper and strolled over to the greeting-card rack.

As she thumbed through the cards, a well-dressed young man moved around the counter and stood beside her. She paid no attention to him. When she turned to leave, he touched her elbow.

"Would you step to the office with me, please?" He smiled pleasantly.

Dear God, she thought wildly. **I've been caught!** She could taste salt on

her lips and her brow felt unpleasantly damp and chilly. The purse slipped from her hands, and she watched with fascinated horror as the wretched pen rolled out and stopped an inch away from her foot. It seemed to grow larger and closer and she realized dimly that she could not hear anything, not even the excited crowd which gathered soon after she lost consciousness . . .

Mrs. Gordon closed the door to the manager's office behind her. She felt sure that it would be easier to walk on water than to traverse the short distance to the nearest exit sign. Nevertheless, with head high and cheeks flaming, she walked somewhat unsteadily to the parking lot, completely convinced that every eye was riveted on her back.

Driving home took almost more energy than she possessed, and as she pulled jerkily into her drive she noticed that her right leg was twitching visibly. Reaction from strain, no doubt. She was unreasonably irritated by the sight of her husband's car in the garage. The very day I need to be alone, need time to think, Horace takes the afternoon off. She shut off the motor and sat quietly, trying to arrange her thoughts.

Ghostly was the only word for the scene she had endured in the manager's office. Mr. Mitchell himself, whom Mrs. Gordon saw occasionally at the country club, came bustling in, bland and dapper. You understand, Mrs. Gordon, that even though we need not report this to the authorities, you must withdraw your account. As he talked, he assumed the nightmarish proportions of an ogre, and, as in a nightmare, Mrs. Gordon found herself paralyzed, voiceless, unable to retaliate. She thanked him meekly and stole out of the office, utterly cowed and exhausted.

Well, as hideous as that ordeal had been, an even nastier one was facing her. How could she tell Horace? Of course she would have to tell him; it was a joint account and he would find out eventually. She infinitely preferred that he hear the story from her own lips instead of piecing it together from bits of gossip. What would he do? What would he say?

Mrs. Gordon drew a mirror from her purse and tried to repair the ravages of tears, fright and over-wrought nerves. Her hands paused in mid-stroke as she realized that, for the first time in years, she and Horace were actually going to **talk**. Not only that, they were going to talk about **her**, about her future, or rather, about their future. Of course, this was a hellish set of circumstances for a conversation, but in a strange, spine-chilling way, it was rather exciting.

She stepped out of the car briskly, almost gaily, and took some pains to rearrange her face before opening the front door. It would hardly do, she thought, to burst in grinning like a school-girl when I tell Horace he's married to a criminal.

CHILDHOOD, FOLLY, AND THE ABSENCE OF REGRET

A Short Story by Francis L. Daugherty

"Snowflake."

"Yes."

"Snowflakes beautiful, like cold and diamond stars."

"Yes."

"You are such a tall man so very tall."

"My height yes, I think I am tall, as you say, Little One."

"Do you know what I think about every time I see snow like this?"

"You think of the times you have hunted . . ."

"Yes . . ."

". . . and killed."

"It is wonderful that you should know this."

". and you think of the snowballs you have thrown, and that one terribly, terribly old lady whom you shoved down a snowbank when you were six."

"Yes, but now I am nine, and I don't do things like that."

The tall man lit a cigarette and looked up at the yellow goblet of light which the street lamp beamed in the blackness of this winter's night. The child next to the man looked up also, seeing magic in snow and thinking of frosty window panes and blue streets.

They began to walk:

"Do you really like snow, my son?"

"Oh yes . . . it is more beautiful than . . . than God must be"

"Do you like the snow merely because of its beauty?"

"No."

"Do you like snow because it is ominously festive . . . because it is a cold celebration?"

"Yessir like that . . a wonderful crystalline celebration."

"I know."

Together, the two walked the icy streets and marvelled at loneliness. They saw houses with lights and children singing Christmas songs and eating rich, dark candy and cake. They saw young people building men of snow and forming snowballs to assail their friends. They felt an old lady, her arms

full of packages, die as she fell on the glazed walkway. They walked these streets together, as frozen layers formed above the earth.

The small boy looked up into the face of the tall, gaunt stranger whom he had met under the lamp's yellow light. His eyes seemed to blaze with fire, and the moonlight gave to his face the look of mauve. The boy noticed that the stranger was attired completely in black, and that he carried a tattered briefcase which bulged from the many papers which he possessed. The boy, with his cloth jacket and toboggan cap, was not cold with this night of winter, but was wonder-filled with the whiteness of mystery, and could hear the songs of the frozen and the damned.

"There is a place . . . I must take you there", said the man. "I will go."

Through howling and bitter winds, they walked on padded cotton snow, and the night's blackness stood in defeat to the powers of reflected moonlight and buildings were as gigantic people asleep without beds on which to lie and rest . . . and trees bent double, seeming to echo from their souls the crying shriek of this freezing wind which circled them and vied for affection.

"This place is it far?"

"No . . . it is not far . . . are you cold?"

"No sir . . . it is too beautiful to think of coldness, except as pleasure."

"You are right beauty as we see and know it is more important than any other single thing, for it is a felt sensation . . . a lightning bolt . . . an arm which holds us up and brings us over."

"Yes sir."

The man pulled from his brown briefcase a great book. He seemed to read his book by the moonlight as they walked along the streets of this city. Sometimes he would laugh at a page. Other times tears would form in the corner-crevices of his narrow eyes, and freeze there unnoticed. The boy wondered about this book which could bring forth such emotion from one so old and tall.

The boy felt that they were now walking up a hill . . . that there were no trees in sight . . . no buildings and no people. It was barren. Up ahead, however, there were lights . . . a long stream of lights which were horizontally parallel to the ground. Against the blackness of this sky, with its pale and golden moon, they looked to be a constellation of tremendous white stars. He said nothing.

"We are near."

"It is brilliant there, isn't it?"

"Yes . . . it is brilliant . . . there. What . . . is your name, Son?"

"Chris . . . Christopher Eric Allen is my name."

"Chris, why do you kill animals in winter . . . why do you make sport of old people in their senility . . . why must you be young?"

"I just try to have some fun . . . all of my friends do the same things . . . but, as I said, I've almost stopped doing those things which I did when I was younger."

The tall man wrote the name **Christopher Eric Allen** at the top of one of the pages of his book, made a hasty notation and slapped the book shut with a sharp noise which reverberated across the fields at the side of the road. Christopher said nothing.

"Are you sorry . . . regretful . . . for the things you have done in your life which were wrong, Christopher?"

"No . . . all my friends did these things . . . but I am older and will not do them any more . . . none of my friends . . . were punished." This is because they did not meet me on their journeys through childhood, Christopher. Only you have met me . . . and I have your name in my book which you have seen."

"Yes sir."

They walked more rapidly now, and the span of horizontal lights were seen to be the outline of a steel structure over ice-blocked water, with white foam raging and tearing, racing and roaring. Christopher said nothing, but halted at the entrance to the structure.

"Come, Christopher."

"Yes sir."

As they took the first few steps along the walkway of the huge, arching curve, they heard the strains of song . . . of an old melody . . . and an ancient Negro was sitting on a crossbar on the side of the bridge, just looking at the water gushing beneath. A stringed instrument accompanied his rugged, guttural voice as he sang, and Christopher remembered the banshees his father had told him existed . . .

" . . . There's a man goin' round takin' names . . .

There's a man goin' around takin' names . . .

. . . he took my father's name . . .

. . . I thought it was a shame . . .

There's a man goin' round takin' names . . .

O he took my mother's name . . . Takin' names . . .

he took my sister's name . . . Takin' names . . .

. . .

. . . and Christopher wondered about this thing of wonderous night.

At the bridge's peak, they stopped their walking and the man looked out over the world's frozen surface. Christopher looked at this too, but said nothing.

"The stars, Christopher . . . are they not beautiful?"

"Yes".

"And the moon . . . Christopher . . .?"

"It, too, is beautiful."

"Reach, Christopher . . . for that moon and those stars and this blackness which is more pale blue than black . . . you were there once . . . Do you remember?"

"I remember . . . I remember that . . . yes . . ."

"Your hands, Christopher . . . you **must reach!**"

Reaching and knowing, Christopher felt frozen hands grip him around the waist . . . felt the initial separation . . . the fall . . . the stars swirling over him . . . the coldness of the water.

The tall man looked after Christopher for a moment. He then took out his book, wrote a few lines, and walked slowly back to the town.

Frank Harris, long a controversial literary figure, is the writer of what is probably the most definitive biography of Oscar Wilde ever undertaken. First written in the 1920's, the biography has had a recent revival, due both to the present popularity of Wilde, and to the fact that the book is now in paperback editions (Dell Publishing Co.)

The biography takes Wilde from childhood, through prep school and Oxford, to fame, fortune and eventual tragedy. As a literary study, the book makes a rather sympathetic character of the Victorian poet and playwright, emphasizing his great weaknesses and lack of insight. Wilde's own personality is never in doubt, however, as we see him confidently tell a first-night audience at *The Importance of Being Earnest* that he was not surprised at their joyous reception, as he felt that it was one of the finest plays ever written. Although modesty was not his strong point, Wilde was not overbearing; rather, he seems to have been immensely charming, as both a formal speaker and as a coffee companion.

The study does not claim for Wilde any literary laurels. It frankly admits that he was widely imitative, and that he might not have ever achieved notable recognition had he not been such a personality of his time. For the character of the man was in wide disagreement with Victorian modes and ideas. He felt that he could transcend Victorian England, humanity, and anything else of consequence merely by avoiding it. An ardent hanger-on to the Ruskin Pre-Raphaelite Movement, he believed that art was only for the sake of art, that art was devoid and completely separate from reality, and that it was, indeed, above reality.

The book takes Wilde through the damning trial where, without a chance, he lost the lawsuit claimed against the Marquis of Queensbury, thus assuring public declamation, and setting the pattern for one of the most tragic downfalls ever to hit a man of talent and importance.

Norman Mailer is a writer of merit, an angry young man and one of the high prophets of the beat movement. His first novel, *The Naked and the Dead*, received such rave reviews that his next novel was eagerly anticipated by the American literary public. Neither his next novel, nor the one after that, lived up to the expectations of critics and general readers. In *Advertisements for Myself*, Mailer has included fiction, essays, poetry and a novel excerpt—all threaded together with critical explanations which he calls "advertisements." Most of the writing is very interesting and of good quality, and there are elements of fascination, for those who are interested in such things, in watching a style and a man evolve. For those who are not familiar with the writing of Mailer, it is racy material, for the most part, exceedingly realistic and topical. Mailer is interested in current problems and has distinct touches of satire in parts of his work. The aspects of the sensational, which perhaps make Mailer more familiar to today's readers, have been blown and exaggerated with his recent unfavorable publicity. This publicity threatens to color his work by the opinions of the public, a situation which was all too true in the cases of Dylan Thomas, Ezra Pound and Hart Crane.

Perhaps the most interesting segment of the entire book is the last part, entitled "The Talent in the Room," in which he critically analyzes, both from a personal and a literary standpoint, the major writers on today's American literary scene. From Nelson Algren to Jack Kerouac, Mailer gives his own opinions on the men and their writings. Someday, perhaps, this essay could have the literary significance of Lowell's "Fable for Critics."

That Mailer is a serious artist, interested both in his species and his country, cannot be denied. What judgement posterity will make is impossible to foresee, but he seems to be honest, critical, and filled with integrity. We shall hear more of him. This, his latest book, is almost a soul-exposure. It is an all-revealing personal opinion, which dips from stark reality to moderate conservatism and apologies. He is careful to qualify most of what he has written with explanatory remarks, but most of the writing will stand alone. It is a book worth the money, whether in the original G. P. Putnam hardback, or in the paperback Signet edition.

Lie Down in Darkness, by William Styron

Reviewed by Patsy Gray

Finally it has happened. Finally, from the dust bowl of modern illiterate ramblings, a major novel has appeared. Slow in starting, this book gains momentum until the emotional pace almost overshadows the climax. In reality, the entire book is one subtle emotional spasm.

The story concerns a Southern family enveloped with dry rot. The personification of this disease is shown in Peyton Loftis, the young daughter. Peyton has all the obvious social characteristics so admired by our middle class. Beauty, wealth, charm were not weapons, but casual tools to be discarded with use. She attended the best schools, knew the correct people, drank the sanctioned liquors, but it was all a token effort toward happiness. Peyton would not grow up. Her father remained the smiling "Bunny" who loved her through an alcoholic haze. Her mother was only a symbol of misunderstanding and dislike. Home was a place from which she had to flee. Peyton had no discourse; she found no sanctuary. Peyton used one outlet—self-destruction.

Styron's style is unusual in the reverse chronology of the action, yet the use of flashback description gives a vivid color to an all-too-gray emotion. It is a sensitive, perceptive portrayal of moral and mental suicide. Brilliant by definition, **Lie Down in Darkness** ranks as one of the major novels written since World War II.

1959-1960 Awards

Poetry.....	Sue Taylor Grafton "Song of Penelope"
Essay.....	Linda Tufts "Spring . . . Again"
Short Story.....	Sue Taylor Grafton "The White Marble"
Book Review	Janet Roark Lawrence Durrell's The Alexandria Quartette
Translation.....	Judy Rogers de Musset's "Chanson de Barberine"
Most Valuable Member.....	Francis L. Daugherty